

*Hudson  
River  
Yesterday  
and Today*

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W67  
1914

To Virgie K. Scott

from

Nancy W. Schofield

March, 1932

HUDSON  
YESTERDAY AND TODAY

BY  
E. F. WORCESTER

A REVISED EDITION  
OF  
HUDSON PAST AND PRESENT



HON. CHARLES HUDSON  
BORN NOV. 4, 1795      DIED MAY 4, 1881

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E. F. WORCESTER



## FOREWORD

THE cordial reception accorded the original volume issued in 1899 under the title of "Hudson, Past and Present" has induced the publisher to put this new edition into print as a further proof of the steady growth of the town and its industries. Indeed so many have been the changes that a majority of the cuts used in Hudson—"Present" have been rendered out of date by changes and improvements made in the buildings illustrated, and we have given our readers practically a new book, being able to present, unchanged, only Hudson—"Past," i. e. previous to the great fire of 1894.

The book is published in the hope that it will prove a source of pleasure to past and present residents and to the casual visitors to our town.

The fact that most of the cuts of Hudson—"Yesterday," were made from tintypes, Daguerreotypes and faded photographs will account for any lack of artistic appearance compared with the views of "Today."

## BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

"The citizens of Hudson have not only shown by their thrift that they have been stirring business men, but their public records show that they have been active as townsmen in preparing everything for a prosperous municipal corporation."

These words of the Hon. Charles Hudson in his address in 1876, will hold equally true today, as evidenced by the energy and personal sacrifices of our townspeople in the trying times following the holocaust of July 4, 1894, resulting in the birth of a new town, and the turning of a public calamity into the means for accomplishing in months what might have taken years by the usual process of a town's development.

Hudsonians are rightly and unanimously proud of their town, and the purpose of this volume is to preserve in a handy form the memories of the "town that was," that we, as well as future generations may in part realize the rapid strides made by her energetic people; to gather between the covers of this book what has heretofore been scattered among many families, and to save from loss scenes of which possibly but one copy has been preserved.

The lasting monuments of buildings now standing on the "burnt district" tell but little to the "stranger within our gates," of the sacrifices necessary to bring the town to its present condition, and it is only by comparison that *we* can realize what has been done in five short years. *Verba volant, Scripta manent.* Words are fleeting, what is written remains.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness for valued assistance rendered by the many citizens who have responded to the call for photographs and bits of history, and whose aid has made the production of the book possible.

## HUDSON YESTERDAY



WASHINGTON STREET BRIDGE, BUILT 1700

HUDSON'S HISTORY may reasonably be said to have been divided into a story of an old and a new town by the disastrous fire of July 4, 1894, when the heart of the business district was almost wholly destroyed, and as the town in its earliest days, then known only as a plantation, had its beginning on the banks of the river near the present Washington Street bridge, so fate decreed that the starting point of the fire, which was the first step towards a re-creation, should be but a few feet away.

Barely three-quarters of a century had elapsed after the landing of the Pilgrims, when one John Barnes obtained a grant of one acre of land lying on both sides of the Assabet river, upon the north side of which was erected a grist mill in 1699. Historians differ as to the builder of this mill, which was the first to be erected on territory now Hudson, but the place was commonly known as Howe's Mills, and the first recorded transfer of real estate is this acre of land and the mill about 1700, to one Joseph Howe, who is supposed by many to have been the builder.

This land, as well as that surrounding it, was included in the bounds of the town of Marlboro, and the early history of the Hudson section is so interwoven with that of the whole that a separation is often difficult. The first settlers were mainly farmers, and as there was then no other mill nearer than Sudbury, they naturally brought their corn here for grinding. This led to more settlements, but progress was slow on account of the desire of the settlers to preserve the place as a farming community.

Soon after the building of the mill, the town of Marlboro, October 2, 1699, voted to build a bridge across the Assabet at Howe's Mills.

One of the first houses was built by Jeremiah Barstow on land now contained in Wood Square, and ten years later was sold to Robert Barnard, the locality afterwards being known as Barnard's Mills.

The first public house was opened in 1794 by Joel Cranston, who also kept a store. The first store,

however, was in what was afterwards known as the "Old Red House," antedating the Revolution, and which stood on land now occupied by Mr. R. B. Lewis' brick block. Its large doorway and many-paned windows show its ancient style. Previous to this time Phineas Sawyer and Jedediah Wood built a sawmill on the brook crossing Main Street now known as the Tannery brook, and in 1788 another mill was built upon the Assabet.

As early as 1790 a blacksmith shop was in operation on the present Washington street, the building being afterwards moved back from the street to the bank of the river, where it stood when destroyed in the great fire, having been occupied over one hundred years as a smithy.

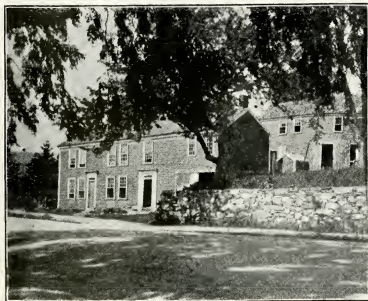


THE OLD RED HOUSE, SITE OF LEWIS BLOCK

Silas Felton came in 1799, joining Cranston in business, and soon after the village commenced to be called Feltonville.

A tannery was started in 1799 on nearly the same land now occupied by Dunn, Green Leather Co., and the business has been carried on almost uninterruptedly up to the present time.

The dawn of the nineteenth century saw many new industries springing into existence, among them saddle and harness making, wool carding and cloth dressing.



POPE HOUSE, BUILT IN 1797  
SITE OF RESIDENCE OF R. B. LEWIS



WITT HOUSE, BUILT IN 1797. SITE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING

The Witt house was built in 1797, and was moved to River street, where it now stands, in 1863; the Manson house was erected on the same spot and was destroyed in the great fire of 1894. During 1797 the Pope house was built on land now occupied by R. B. Lewis' residence and was moved in sections to make way for that. A solid ledge underlies this land as well as all of Wood Square and surrounding lots.

In 1808 Phineas Sawyer built a factory known as the Marlboro Satinet Factory, which business he carried on until January 1, 1820, when he lost his life. The water wheel which supplied his power was stopped with ice, which he proceeded to cut away, stepping on the wheel in so doing; the wheel when released commenced to revolve, carrying Mr. Sawyer down with it, and he was soon drowned. The factory was burned in 1834.

The first physician came to town in 1809, and lived in the "Old Peters House," which stood on land now partially occupied by Chamberlain's block.

A school house was built in 1812, and probably established a record for speed in building which has rarely been excelled in town, certainly not in the erection of school houses. The voters from this village



OLD PETERS HOUSE, BUILT IN 1794



"PETERS' STORE." SITE OF HUDSON PRINTING CO. BUILDING  
OCCUPIED FOR BUSINESS AUGUST 15, 1801. FIRST POST OFFICE LOCATED HERE IN 1828. BUILDING DESTROYED IN GREAT FIRE



succeeded in getting a vote passed for this school house, which would undoubtedly have been rescinded at an adjourned session had not the people taken hold, felled and hewn the timber, and erected the building, so that before the date of adjournment was reached the building was completed and ready for occupancy.

Among the first scholars attending this school, which was on Washington street where Everett street

now runs, was Charles Hudson, who lived to see the village grow to a township and bear his name, an honor which was a well-earned tribute to his character and example.

The Felton House was built in 1803 and was a familiar landmark for many years until replaced by the large brick block of H. W. Chase. This building was occupied by Joel Cranston for some time and known as Cranston's Hotel, also used by Col. Stewart as a tavern.

The hall in the upper story of the ell was used by the Baptists for meetings, also for dramatic and local entertainments by various organizations.

The belief "in farms rather than in towns" still impeded the growth of the community, but small manufacturing was



THE FELTON HOUSE. SITE OF CHASE BUILDING





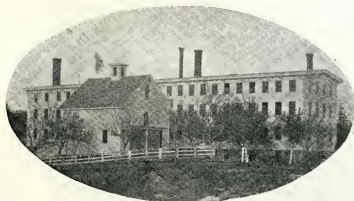
GEORGE HOUGHTON'S FIRST SHOE FACTORY, CORNER OF MAIN AND HIGH STREETS, 1858

gradually introduced, and the population increased as there became a demand for their labor.

The foundation of the shoe-making industry may be said to have been laid by Daniel Stratton, who as early as 1816, started in business. He built a factory about 1821 on Washington street, when there were still but two dwelling houses and one store at the "Mills," and business was necessarily done on a small scale. Here he employed four hands and continued the business a few years, selling it to his son Lorenzo, who in turn



LOOKING ACROSS WASHINGTON STREET BRIDGE



STOWE, BILLS & HAWLEY FACTORY, MAIN STREET, 1854  
OPPOSITE GROVE STREET

sold to William Brigham, and the name of Brigham has been actively identified with our leading industry continually until 1911.

Francis Brigham, the head of the firm F. Brigham & Co. at the time his death, learned his trade in this factory, afterwards moving to a building which stood just off Main street, then to a brick building standing on site of present Holden's Block.

In 1847, the building commonly known as the "Co-operative Store" was built and the shoe business moved there and continued to grow.



VIEW FROM POPE'S HILL (MOUNT BELLEVUE) 1862

The firm of Stowe, Bills & Hawley commenced in 1854.

In 1857, George Houghton built a shoe factory at the corner of Main and High streets sixty feet long, three stories high with a basement, which he enlarged the following year to one hundred feet in length, at this time an unheard of size, giving rise to many dire predictions of failure and the like.

The first steam engine ever used in the limits of



GEORGE HOUGHTON FACTORY, LOOKING EAST  
MAIN STREET, CORNER OF HOUGHTON



GEORGE HOUGHTON FACTORY, LOOKING WEST  
UNITARIAN CHURCH AT EXTREME RIGHT

Marlboro was run in this building, a five horse-power upright one.

The foundation of a large and profitable shoe business was here established. This building was moved in 1863 to form an ell to his Main street factory shown in picture above, a part of the front portion having been used as a station by the Fitchburg Railroad. Sixty feet were added and a French roof put on over the whole.

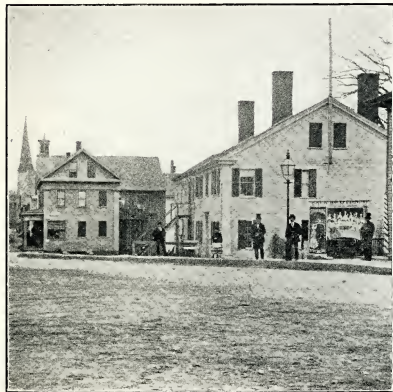
The same year, 1857, the brick factory of F. Brigham & Co. was built and the shoe business was rapidly



VIEW FROM POPE'S HILL (MOUNT BELLEVUE) 1862. THE TANNERY BUILDINGS ARE AT THE EXTREME RIGHT



becoming of large proportions. Luman T. Jefts began business in 1859. The amount of business done made



LOOKING DOWN MAIN STREET, 1862



WEST SIDE OF WOOD SQUARE, 1862

a demand for factories to supply the lasts, dies and machinery, and we find these springing into existence together with a box factory, the latter being first founded about 1844 in a building where had previously been located a cider brandy distillery, which business at one time assumed large proportions, more apples being brought in than could be handled.

At the beginning of the Civil War the existing military formations in the state were altered somewhat, and men from this vicinity were enlisted in several different regiments, which early went to the front for a three years' service.



A "SEVEN-IN-HAND" IN WOOD SQUARE

(FROM AN OLD TIN-TYPE)

The following year, May, 1862, another company of Volunteers was organized in Feltonville, of which the late Lieut.-Col. W. E. C. Worcester was the first captain. This company was lettered I, of the Fifth Regiment, and did active service in many of the battles of that war. This company, although credited to the parent town, was principally recruited from this village, a part of its membership coming from neighboring localities.

The picture on this page shows the buildings formerly standing on the north side of Wood Square: the one on the right was afterwards the shoe factory of L. Stratton and still later turned around

when Felton street was laid out. The building next stood where the street now runs. This building was moved to site of present Sherman House where it was burned. The cut also shows the end of the "Old Red House" and corner of Solon Wood's store.

In connection with the shoe business it may be interesting to notice the following two advertisements which appeared in the local paper, as showing that the present department stores are hardly more diversi-

fied in their stock than were some of our early factories. These are reproduced almost exactly as the originals appeared:



SHOE FACTORY OF L. STRATTON

---

F. BRIGHAM & CO.,  
Manufacturers of  
WOMEN'S and CHILDREN'S BOOTEES,  
and Dealers in Choice Family Flour. Hudson.

---

WM. F. TROWBRIDGE,  
Manufacturer of  
MEN'S MISSES and CHILDREN'S BALMORALS,  
Buff, Split, Calf, Peble, and Goat Boots and Shoes and  
Dealer in Family Flour.  
Wood Square, Hudson.

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During all this period since the first settlement, the village, now rapidly growing, was still but a part of the town of Marlboro, and although the apportionment of town officers was such that no complaint could be made

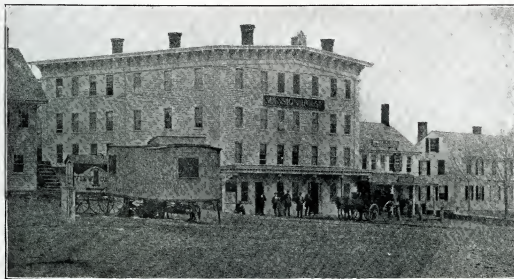


by the residents of Feltonville, yet the inconvenience of going four miles to attend town meeting began to excite public sentiment, which the local newspaper voiced in several articles. The outcome of this agitation was a call for a public meeting of all the citizens in Union Hall, Tuesday evening, May 16, 1865. This meeting was largely attended and the question of incorporation thoroughly discussed. The sentiment

was pretty generally in favor of the movement which also developed the fact that many of the citizens of Berlin and Bolton desired to have the sections of their towns lying next the proposed new town annexed to it. This naturally gave rise to objections from the towns interested, which complicated matters somewhat.

For some reason the first meeting was adjourned without any action being taken and a meeting called the following Tuesday, at which these resolutions were adopted:

*"Whereas, we the inhabitants of Feltonville and vicinity, believing that the time has arrived when it will be for our*



MANSION HOUSE. BUILT 1843. REMODELLED 1856. DESTROYED 1894

best interests and welfare to withdraw from our respective municipal corporations and be incorporated into a new town: therefore,

*RESOLVED*, that a committee of nine be appointed to take into consideration the subject of establishing the boundary lines of said new town and the most feasible way of drawing up the petition for that purpose, and that they be instructed to procure such legal advice as they may deem necessary on the subject, and report at some future meeting to be called by them."

The committee attended to the duty assigned and the citizens determined upon the boundary lines as recommended by the committee, petitions being drawn in accordance with the same, several slight changes

having been made to include outlying farms. A new committee of five was then chosen to make arrangements for incorporation.

When the question of a name came up for consideration two propositions were offered, one by Silas Felton offering \$1,000 should the name of Felton be selected, the other from Hon. Charles Hudson who agreed to donate \$500 for the foundation of a Free Public Library should the name of Hudson be given the new town. It has not, we believe, been quite clear why the latter proposition was accepted, but such was the case.

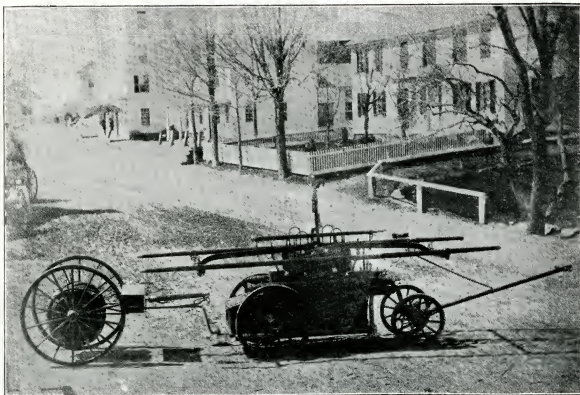


ATKINSON HOUSE BUILT 1860. DESTROYED IN GREAT FIRE, 1894



PIANO FACTORY, BROAD STREET. BURNED JULY 4, 1874—HUDSON'S FIRST DISASTROUS FIRE

The burden of the work rested on this new committee and it is a fact pointed to with pride that although in the face of much opposition, no lobby was employed or unlawful means attempted in attaining the desired result.



HYDRAULICON No. 3. PURCHASED 1849

The counsel for the town closed his plea as follows:

“If incorporated, I believe that the town of Hudson at no distant day will become a town that shall do honor to Middlesex County, to the towns from which she is taken, and will remember them for what they may each have done for her.”

After much legal controversy, the act incorporating the new town of Hudson was passed March 16, 1866.

The town then had 306 voters. March 20, 1868, the town bounds as they now exist were determined upon, taking in a part of the town of Bolton.

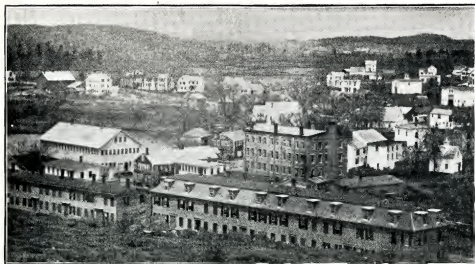


WHERE EVERY SCHOLAR WENT AT NOON, RECESS AND NIGHT  
TO LOOK FOR MAIL



JOEL CUMMINGS, A FAMILIAR FIGURE TO OLDER RESIDENTS  
OF THE TOWN AND HIS "STORE" ON FELTON STREET.





VIEWS FROM POPE'S HILL

and the wooden shoe factory of F. Brigham & Co. in process of erection. When this building was completed it had a large hall in the upper story in which was held a dedication dance, at which nearly every citizen of the town was mentioned as an aid. This hall was used as an armory, dance hall, etc.

The lower story was first used as a grist mill.

The first view shown on this page was taken in 1863, showing Central street, across the river, before it was re-located; also the blacksmith shop, nearly opposite Brigham's brick shop, previous to its being moved. Notice the large barns in various spots which have long since given way to modern residences.

The second view, taken about 1866, shows the Trowbridge factory completed,





UP MAIN STREET ABOUT 1870 FROM IN FRONT OF TOWN HOUSE LAWN

The shoe business was further increased in 1865 by the building of the four story wooden shoe factory of W. F. Trowbridge, where his business was transferred and enlarged. The business offices, a jewelry store and a tailor shop occupied the front of the first floor, which was considerably above the street level.



THE FIRST DECORATION DAY, 1869

After the close of the Civil War. appropriate exercises were held May 30, 1869, the speaking being from the piazza of this factory, the local band furnishing music for the occasion. The day has since been annually observed, the town making an appropriation for the expenses of the same, used under direction of Post No. 9, G. A. R., named Reno in honor of General Reno.

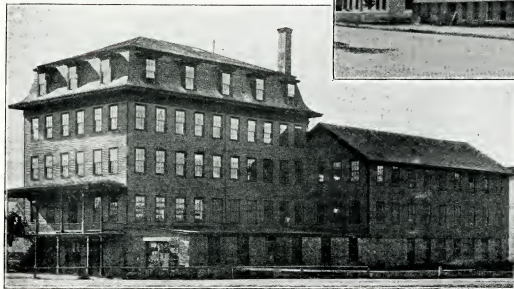
Many local organizations have from time to time assisted the Post in their services, and in decorating soldiers' graves.





THE EAST END FROM POPE'S HILL (MOUNT BELLEVUE) 1875

The building owned by F. S. Dawes and occupied partially by his die shop and by Bradley & Sayward, was built on made land, filled in to the Tannery Pond, the fence formerly running along its edge being shown on page 14, in the picture entitled "George Houghton's factory, looking



BRADLEY'S SHOP, 1870. NOW OCCUPIED BY FULLER, CHANDLER & PATTEN CO.



L. T. JEFFS' SHOE FACTORY, 1870

east." This building was the scene of a fire which good work of the firemen alone prevented from being disastrous.

The electric light station was formerly located in the engine room of the shop until taken over by the Town.



THE CENTRE OF THE TOWN FROM POPE'S HILL. (MOUNT BELLEVUE) 1870

The burning of the Brick Shop, so called, in 1882, which totally destroyed the building, caused a considerable inconvenience to the shoe business of F. Brigham & Co., but



RESIDENCE OF R. H. BRIGHAM. DESTROYED IN GREAT FIRE



FACTORY OF F. BRIGHAM & CO. BUILT 1857. BURNED 1882

the firm made use of the buildings on the south side of the river, which they continued to occupy until they leased the factory of the Hudson Real Estate Co., on South Street soon after the great fire. The site of the brick shop is now partially occupied by the Boston & Worcester Trolley freight terminal. The Thomas H. Logan Co., purchased and occupied the Real Estate Co. building in December, 1912.



THE WEST END FROM POPE'S HILL (MOUNT BELLEVUE) 1875





STORE OF SOLON WOOD & CO., 1870  
DESTROYED 1894

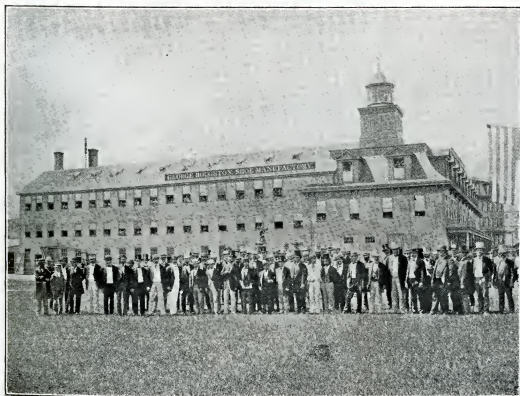
the buildings shown on this page were destroyed in the great fire. Lewis Block and Prescott Building now occupy the locations shown in the second picture. Pythian Hall occupied the upper story of Lewis Block when burned.

Solon Wood's store occupied the centre of the square, on site of one of the first buildings built in this vicinity, the building being several times remodelled and enlarged. The land it occupied was purchased by the town for \$10,000 soon after the fire. All



LEWIS BLOCK AND THE R. STRATTON BUILDING. DESTROYED 1894

In August, 1872, the Japanese Embassy paid a visit of inspection to Hudson, under guidance of a committee from the Boston Shoe and Leather Exchange. These gentlemen were native Japanese sent by their government to investigate the various manufactures in this country, and it was a compliment of the



THE VISIT OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSY, 1872

highest kind that they should be brought here. The processes of tanning were thoroughly examined, and they were then taken through the Houghton Shoe Factory, it being considered a model factory at that time. A pleasing part of the program was the making of several pairs of shoes for the visitors during their progress through the shop, they watching the various operations as the work progressed. The finished shoes were taken as souvenirs by the visitors, who expressed themselves as "highly delighted and instructed."

The picture shows the Embassy in the centre of the group.

The land lying east of the fac-

tory and forming the corner of Main and Broad streets, was preserved by Mr. Houghton for a number of years as a park, in the centre of which was a handsome fountain. The lot is now covered by the Phaneuf and Seymour buildings. The building was destroyed by fire January 2, 1904.

In 1880, Hudson's shoe industry was further increased by the occupation of the Piano Shop by Mr. Joseph S. Bradley, who had retired, as did Mr. Trowbridge, from the firm of F. Brigham & Co. The building is the one now occupied by Fuller, Chandler & Patten Co., formerly used by Kaler & Shaw, who resumed business here after their fire in 1874.



SCHOOL STREET SCHOOL HOUSE

Hudson's shoe industry was well advertised by two novel floats in the procession connected with Boston's 250th anniversary in 1880, from the George Houghton factory. One float being a log cabin and an early settler's family making shoes by hand, the other a fully equipped factory, with every necessary machine, including upright steam engine for power, where complete shoes were being produced.





MANSION HOUSE AND HOLDEN'S BLOCK, 1870. BOTH  
DESTROYED IN GREAT FIRE, 1894. SITE OF  
HUDSON DEPARTMENT STORE AND BANCROFT BUILDING

The George Stratton House stood at the corner of Pope street, on spot now occupied by the Savings Bank Block. This building was blown up to prevent further progress of the great fire.



THE GEORGE STRATTON HOUSE. BUILT 1834. SITE OF SAVINGS BANK BUILDING

The Mansion House, remodelled from Cox's Tavern, stood on site of Solon Wood's new block and was prominent among the old buildings before the fire. It was built upon a solid ledge of rock which underlies all the buildings on the north side or Wood Square.

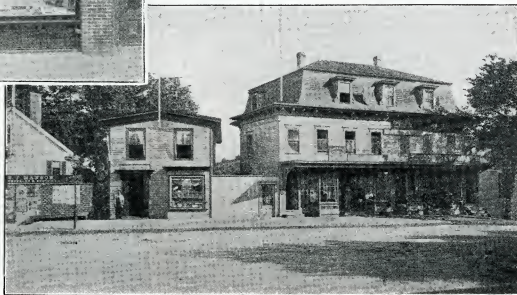


POST OFFICE IN MANSON'S BRICK BLOCK

Brigham's Block was also occupied at various times by the Savings Bank, which was incorporated February 6, 1869, Lewis' Photograph Studio, Law Offices, etc. The third story contained G. A. R. Hall when burned. The old post office building now stands on Warner Street; the other buildings shown were all destroyed in the great fire.

With the exception of temporary changes made necessary by the erection of Manson's Block in 1886 and by the great fire, the Post Office stood in nearly the location shown since about 1850, when it was removed from Brigham's Block, where it was located for some time after leaving the Peters Building.

It was moved to its present location in December, 1902.



OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING AND BRIGHAM'S, AFTERWARDS COCHRAN'S BLOCK

Early in 1882, several prominent business men instituted a movement which resulted in the organization and chartering of the Hudson National Bank. They commenced business in March, with banking rooms in the Town House.

In 1885 a Co-operative Bank was incorporated, giving the town a system of banks which has proved popular with all classes, as the large deposits in each denote.

This year saw, also, the foundation of the present Apsley Rubber Co., commenced by Apsley & Coffin under the title of the Goodyear Gossamer Co. These gentlemen began business in the wooden building of F. Brigham & Co., now occupied by the Hudson Counter Co., and Novelty Paper Box Co., which they continued to use until they purchased an extensive tract of land where their buildings now stand, on which they erected substantial brick buildings specially adapted to their use. The diversity of industries is what has given the town a more than average prosperity, and the rubber clothing and rubber shoe bus-



THE LANCASTER R. R. BRIDGE, 1886, SHOWING HOUSES ON MAPLE AND ELM STREETS



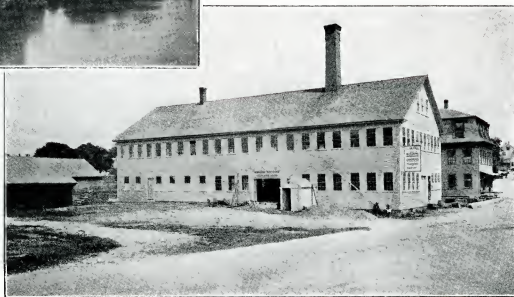
ENLARGED TO FORM SHOE FACTORY OF  
C. M. BRETT & Co.

the same into consideration. This committee recommended an appropriation "for a thorough survey and plan for taking water from Gates' Pond, and an estimated cost of constructing the works."

An appropriation was made in April, 1883, and an act authorizing

iness has been an important factor in the upbuilding of Hudson.

At the town meeting November 7, 1882, the matter of a system of water works was brought up by an article in the warrant and a vote was passed authorizing the appointment of a committee of fifteen who should take

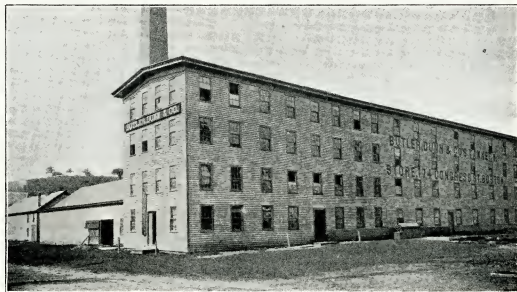


BUILDING NOW OCCUPIED BY HUDSON COUNTER CO., AS IT APPEARED IN 1870

the taking of water passed the Legislature, and was approved April 25. Gates' Pond, which was selected, lies in the town of Berlin and had at that time an area of about ninety acres, with a natural water shed of one hundred and forty-one acres. The surface of the pond was then 103 feet above the curbing at Wood Square, giving a natural fall sufficient to reach the top of nearly every building in town. When completed, 8.2 miles of pipe had been laid, varying in size from 4 to 16 inches. Water was let in from the pond December 16, 1884.

The water is free from contamination, and of the finest quality. A large number of applications for water were received and so popular has been the system that rates are extremely low, and extensions of the water main have been frequently necessary. The system now consists of 27.67 miles of pipe of the various sizes, with 302 gates and 186 hydrants. The income, inclusive of hydrant service, was nearly \$10,000 in 1898, water being taken by 1,014 families in addition to business and other uses. The fact that no pumping is required makes the expense of maintenance of the system comparatively light.

In 1898, a new dam was con-



THE TANNERY IN 1870. THE BUILDING AT THE EXTREME LEFT WAS USED FOR THE ENGINE HOUSE OF "HOUGHTON, NO. 2." PART OF BELFRY SHOWS IN PICTURE

structed, giving an extra storage depth of two feet and an additional water shed of about twenty acres. An auxiliary pipe line was also laid from the pond running parallel to the first line, except at the pond. This gave a much increased pressure as was proven by the thorough test given the whole system on December 6 of that year.



MADE OBSOLETE BY THE WATER WORKS

November 16, 1887, a military company was organized, designated M, and attached to the Fifth Regiment. This company enlisted in the U. S. service for duty in the Spanish war, and while not seeing active service in any of the Spanish countries, was in camp nine months ready for duty. On their return from the South the company was reorganized. The armory was formerly located in the Opera House, later in the upper story of the Town House and now in the new State Armory.



Hudson was also represented in the navy during the recent war, both at Santiago on the Brooklyn, and at Manilla on the flagship of Admiral Dewey.

Many old buildings, dating back a hundred years or more, are still standing in very nearly their original form, but have not been included in the views shown herein. Some like



THE WILLARD COX HOUSE



RESIDENCE OF F. E. BROWN. DESTROYED 1894

the Cox house, have been remodelled so that hardly a suggestion of their former self remains. The frames of most, if not all of them, were hewn from oak, and in many cases were boarded with oak or chestnut lumber.

The Witt house shown on page 7, stood on the site of the Brown house. The small house showing through at the right is this house in its present location on River St.



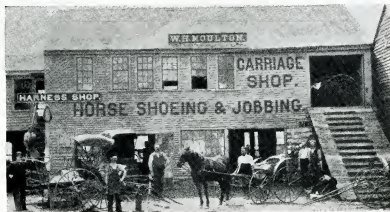
BRIGHAM'S SHOP, 1870. DESTROYED 1894

"Looking across Washington Street Bridge," was moved to the other side of the river.

The blacksmith shop here shown is the one formerly standing on Washington street as early as 1790. This stood next the shed in which the great fire started, and with the shop was totally destroyed.

The wooden shoe factory of F. Brigham & Co. stood on the site of Howe's mill and the lower story was used for a long time as a grist mill by R. H. Brigham. When destroyed, the whole factory building was used for the shoe business with the exception of a small store in the first story.

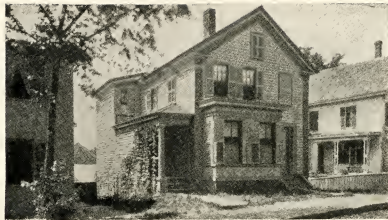
The old mill building formerly on the site, and shown on page 12 in picture



ONE HUNDRED YEARS A SMITHY. DESTROYED 1894

No nearer an ideal National Holiday ever dawned than in 1894, the twentieth anniversary of the first serious fire, the morning having been ushered in by the small boys and others, with the usual ceremonies supposed to be necessary to the birth of each new "Fourth." Had all the small boys finished their celebrating with the dawn, this story would probably have to be told in a much different way.

Several small boys, however, continued the celebra-



RESIDENCE OF F. W. TROWBRIDGE, 2ND.  
DESTROYED 1894. SITE OF ST. LUKE'S CHURCH



THE TROWBRIDGE SHOP. STARTING POINT OF FIRE

tion in the afternoon with fire-crackers and the like in the rear of the shoe factory of Frank H. Chamberlain, and started the fire which spread with such disastrous results. The town was soon awakened to the possibilities attending the progress of the fire, which was rapidly eating into the factory in front and spreading to each side, fanned by a strong west wind.

Coming as did the first alarm, when many of the firemen and more of the

people were at Riverside Park, the response was not as prompt as usual and the fire had gained a headway too strong to be easily subdued.

• Assistance was telegraphed for to many places and a generous response was given. The flames had rapidly spread, impeded for a time by the many trees in the square, but trees and blocks, wooden and brick, melted in the hot breath of the fire fiend. The rapid spread in many cases cut off the firemen from hydrants in use, preventing their being closed, thus lessening the pressure of the water and rendering the fine system of water works almost useless.

Steamers and other fire apparatus rapidly arrived from neighboring places and volunteers industriously pumped the brakes on the old Eureka Engine, which made itself useful on the west side of the square. The George Stratton house was blown up to prevent further progress of the flames in its direction, and the large tin roof on the Underwood Building was fanned like a handkerchief in the air, preventing the flames from



CHASE BLOCK IN 1870. AFTERWARDS RAISED ONE STORY TO CONTAIN ODD FELLOWS' HALL



The gathering clouds predicted a shower which shortly followed, and the wind veering to the east, drove the flames back over the vast blackened area of what was once the throbbing business heart of the town, and the progress of the fire was rapidly prevented. Men could not have

entering the Hudson House, which stood next to it. The combined forces of all who could assist seemed hardly sufficient to prevent the destruction of the entire centre of the town. Cinders were carried to a great distance, setting fires which leveled two houses outside the "burnt district" and threatening churches and the town house.



HUDSON HOUSE, 1870. THE UNDERWOOD BUILDING NEXT MARKED THE EDGE OF THE BURNT DISTRICT ON THE EAST



worked harder on their own homes than did the firemen sent to our aid, and the town owes much to them and our own fire department that more of the town was not destroyed.

The ladies did good service in furnishing food for the workers, scouring the town for provisions and coffee, which was served in the vestry of the Unitarian Church. The militia was called out for guard duty and prevented the destruction and carrying away of property that had been saved.



THE BURNT DISTRICT FROM ROOF OF BUILDING OF F. BRIGHAM & CO., JULY 5, 1894

Nearly forty buildings were destroyed, covering an area of over 5 acres and representing a loss of fully a half million dollars, all of which had been accomplished in less than three hours. The night was vivid with the smouldering fire and nearly all the old landmarks had vanished forever.

The few trees that had withstood the fierce heat, loomed up in the darkness, blackened to the roots,





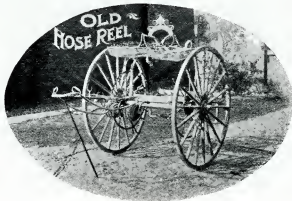
MAIN STREET JUST PREVIOUS TO THE GREAT FIRE OF JULY 4, 1894

with branches bare, and served as about the only guides to show where once had stood the buildings they had so vainly endeavored to shelter.

Here and there, among the ruins, were solitary figures pouring streams of water on the smoking mass, and most conspicuous of all, among the landmarks still standing, was the Old Elm, marking the extreme western end of the burnt district.

Next morning that magnificent old elm was standing as it had stood almost a century through, a silent sentinel, itself a wreck amid a scene of desolation no picture can fully portray; a part of "Hudson that was" in ruins around, it seemed emblematic of the fortitude which has characterized the town and its people.

It scattered its scorched leaves as if for seed from which should spring a town anew: they fell on good ground and a new town arose as if by magic.





VIEW OF BURNT DISTRICT FROM COX SQUARE, 1894. SHOWING OLD ELM, PLANTED 1796



LOOKING DOWN MAIN STREET FROM WOOD SQUARE, 1899

## HUDSON TODAY



DANFORTH'S FALLS

IN the reconstruction which followed the great fire, Hudson's business men proved that, although stunned by the blow, they had an immense amount of courage which the disaster had stimulated, and as their buildings melted in the flames, visions of new and better structures arose in their places, and these soon became realities.

Scarcely had daylight dawned on July 5 when workmen commenced at the ruins, clearing away for foundations of new buildings, and the storekeepers rapidly found shelter for themselves and what little stock had been saved, in vacant stores or parts of stores occupied by their more fortunate brothers in trade, who had escaped the flames.

New buildings were rapidly pushed to completion, Graves' block (now Hurlburt's) being the first one finished for occupancy, the first store opened being named The Phenix.

The Lawrence building was finished for stores December 15, and the other buildings rapidly followed, until we have today fifteen brick and granite blocks covering the burned district and giving the business section an appearance not equalled by towns of much larger size.

We have lost, it is true, much of the simple beauty of a shaded country business street, with its old-fashioned stores and picturesque scenes. Some of our older business men, too, have dropped by the wayside, aged all too rapidly by the terrible experiences of the fire. Old landmarks have disappeared; but in their places has arisen a busy commercial section that is a credit to any locality. Others have stepped in

to fill the vacant places, and new landmarks have been made which should stand for many years as monuments to the enterprise of our people.

The town has been well represented in important political offices in the state and nation, by State Representatives and Senators, National Representative, Governor's Council and leading committees, who have maintained the dignity of the town.



ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER STATION. CHERRY STREET

Secret societies abound and brethren of nearly all orders can here clasp hands with fellow members. The best appointed halls are Odd Fellows' Hall in Lewis' Block, leased by Hudson Lodge, No. 154, and Masonic Hall in Savings Bank Block. Cochran's, St. Jean's and Hurlburt's Halls at the west end and Knights of Columbus and Hibernian Halls at the east end, give an abundance of roomy meeting places.

Hudson Lodge of Elks occupies a suite of rooms in Lawrence building formerly used by the Riverside Association and the Eagles are next door in the Chase building.

The ladies are well represented by organizations, the most cosmopolitan being the Hudson Woman's Club, organized in 1898, with a membership now of about 250. This club has been in the lead in town improvement having been instrumental in founding





HUDSON'S HANDSOME MUNICIPAL BUILDING

the district nurse association, beautifying public grounds, and furnishing invalid chair and stretcher for the sick.

The public school system is under the careful supervision of a competent superintendent, ably assisted by thirty-two teachers, including music, manual training and sewing; in the two latter a large number of first and second prizes awarded pupils at out of town exhibitions attests the skill attained by our pupils in these branches.



BRUCE POND LOOKING NORTH

The history of the schools dates back to 1779 when the first school house was built, another in 1812 and the School street school house in 1855; this was put at as near the geographical centre of the village as possible, the distance being measured from each man's door yard.

Supplementing the schools is the Public Library in a well appointed Library Building built in 1904 on land purchased by the town and built by a donation of \$12,500 from Andrew Carnegie and an appropriation by the town. Funds collected some years ago for a memorial to the Civil War were used in making the reading room such a memorial, with a tablet, over a handsome fireplace, bearing the names of those from Hudson who fell in battles of that war. This tablet is appropriately decorated on Memorial Day.

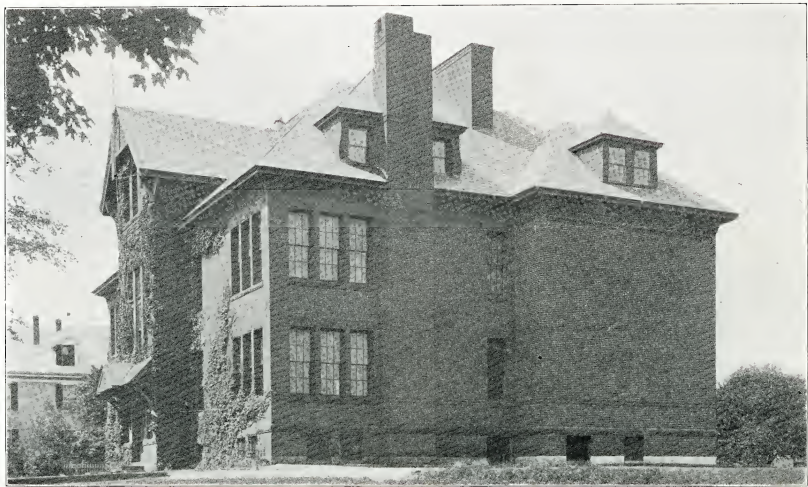
The Library is open daily, and in 1913 had a circulation of 42,028 volumes.



PUBLIC LIBRARY AND READING ROOM



HARRIMAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, APSLEY STREET



HIGH SCHOOL, FELTON STREET



The various church denominations are well represented, each in an edifice of its own, all of which are illustrated here.

The Baptist society is the oldest one organized in town, and they held meetings as early as 1844. Their first church was built on Church street in 1851 and was used until their present one was built on the same spot; the corner stone was laid December 2, 1875



ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, 1869



BAPTIST CHURCH ABOUT 1865

and the church dedicated October 23, 1877.

The Unitarians met in Freedom Hall, so called, in the School street school house in 1854 and the present building was erected in 1860.

The Methodists held their first preaching service April 9, 1865 and laid the foundations of their Main street church in 1866 which they occupied until it was burned, February 28, 1911.

Their new church building was dedicated June 15, 1913.





FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH  
MAIN AND CHURCH STREETS



FORMER METHODIST CHURCH  
BURNED FEB. 28, 1911



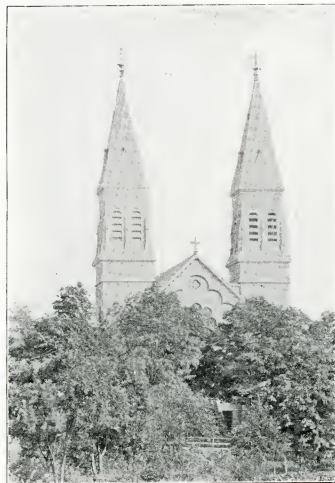
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
FELTON AND PLEASANT STREETS

The Congregational society held a meeting for organization in 1889 in Temple Hall in the Chase building, and St. Luke's Episcopal Mission was held in St. Luke's Hall also in this building, nearly on the site of the Felton house in which the Baptists first held meetings. The Congregational Church was dedicated September 3, 1902.

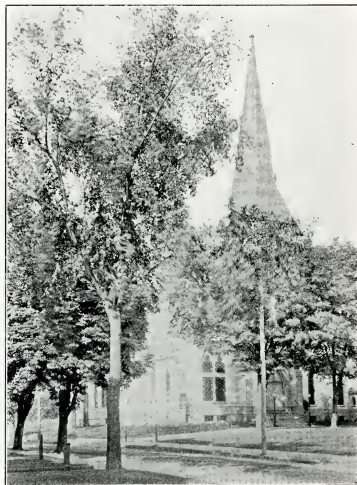
The Catholic society organized in 1869 and built a church on Cross street in that year. The corner stone of their present church was laid August 25, 1889. The old building which stood in the rear of the present one was used as a parish hall until it was burned in 1903.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
CENTRAL AND GREEN STREETS



ST. MICHAEL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
MAPLE AND CROSS STREETS



BAPTIST CHURCH, CHURCH STREET

St. Luke's Episcopal Mission met for some time in the basement of their present church temporarily roofed over; the building as now completed was dedicated Palm Sunday, 1913.



ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL MISSION  
WOOD SQUARE

The fire department had its beginning in January, 1842, when the Feltonville Engine Co. was formed with twenty-one members, and a hand engine. In 1849 a new engine, called Hydraulic No. 3 was purchased and in 1872 the "Eureka" hand engine was bought, the company name having been changed to Eureka in 1857. This engine and company made a record of 229 feet 1 1/2 inches at Portland, Maine, October 12, 1875 which stood as a world's record for many years.

The bell in the tower of the Central Fire Station was originally in the belfry of "Houghton No. 2." house in one of the tannery buildings on Houghton street, later in the Felton street engine house until that building was destroyed in the great fire. The present department includes three engineers, one steamer with two men, one Hook and Ladder Co., 12 men, three Hose Companies with eight men each, besides 15 substitutes. A fire alarm system, with 24 boxes and two steam whistles, is in operation with about 18 miles of wires. A new underground system was recently put in on Main street.



STATE ARMORY. COMPANY M, FIFTH REGIMENT. WASHINGTON AND PARK STREETS



HOSE TWO

the Boston Elevated (via Concord). Express is handled by three companies, with freight service in addition to the steam roads, over the Boston & Worcester trolley line with two trips daily.

The Municipal Light and Power department gives unsurpassed service twenty-four hours per day, seven days in the week, with low rates. Their

Hudson is 28 miles from Boston on the direct line of the Central Massachusetts division of the B. & M. R. R. and on a branch of the Fitchburg division. Three lines of electrics meet in Hudson, giving half-hourly service with through cars to Boston and hourly service to Worcester and Fitchburg, and



HOSE ONE





JUNCTION CENTRAL AND LINCOLN STREETS  
TRIANGULAR PLOT ORNAMENTED BY HUDSON WOMAN'S CLUB

equipment includes 140 miles of overhead wires and a capacity of generators and engines of 650 Kilowatts or 867 horse-power. The street lighting system supplies 34 100 c. p. and 400 40 c. p. Mazda Series lamps and two flame arc lamps. The Sewerage pumping station is operated by this current, about 8½

million gallons a month being pumped to the filter beds.

The Board of Public Works has supervision of the entire system of Water Works, Sewerage, Electric Light and Power and of the streets of which there are 84 miles. The main streets are kept in high grade condition as the town is a thoroughfare for automobiles in all directions.

Wood Park on Park street and Apsley Park opposite, with Assabet river between, are two tracts of wooded land donated to the town by the late Marshall Wood and Hon. L. D. Apsley. These are cared for by the Park Commissioners and improvements are added from year to year.

Banking facilities are covered by a National, a Savings and a Co-operative Bank, the first being a member of the Federal Reserve Bank.

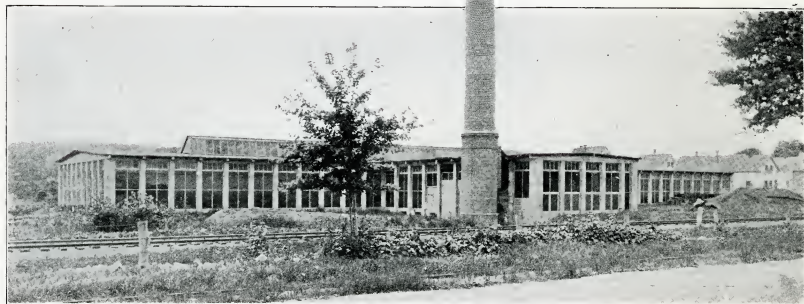


CENTRAL FIRE STATION

The large variety of manufacturing interests illustrate the town a "balance" and includes a great number of

The Board of Trade, through its lookout committee and individuals, is on the alert for new business for the town, whose facilities of manufacturers looking for a location.

trated in the following pages gives smaller industries not illustrated. mittee and individuals, is on the are such as to merit the considera-



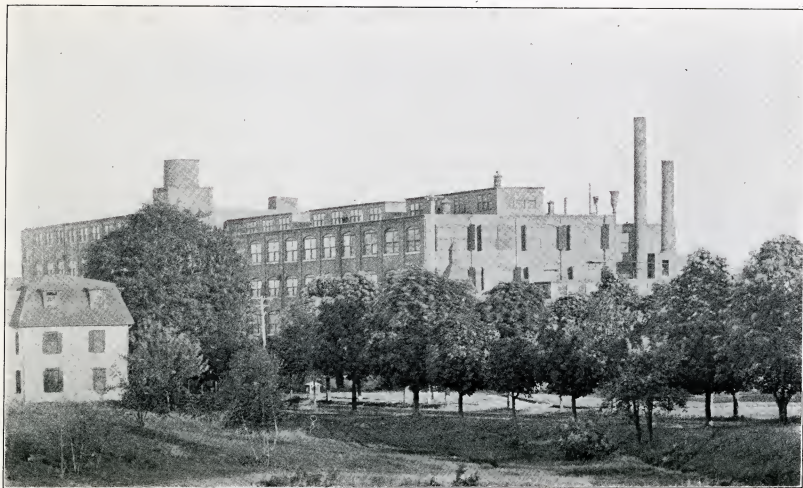
WOTTOQUOTTOC WORSTED CO., CHERRY STREET



FROM MOUNT BELLEVUE



FROM MOUNT BELLEVUE



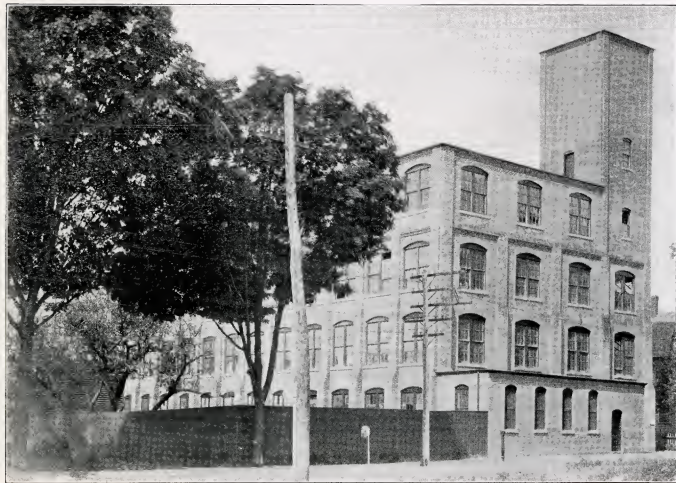
BOOT AND SHOE BUILDING, APSLEY RUBBER CO., FROM THE NORTHWEST

*Firestone Footwear Co.*

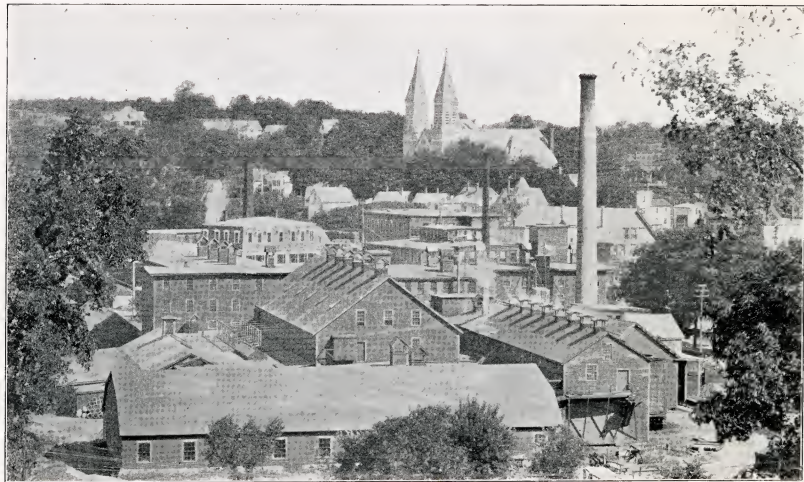




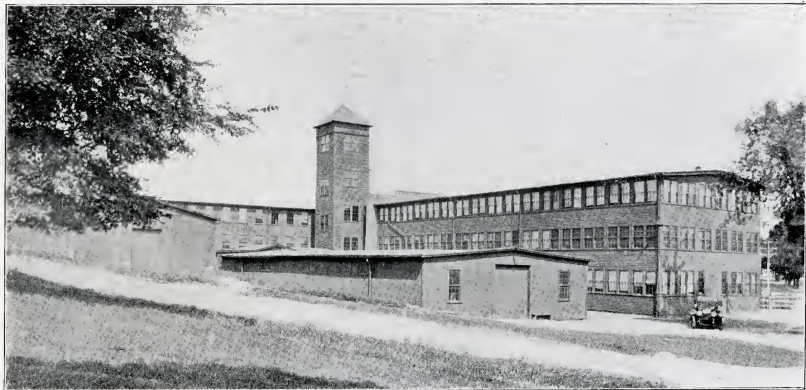
THOS. H. LOGAN CO. SHOE FACTORY, SOUTH STREET



PART OF THE PLANT OF THE HUDSON WORSTED CO., BROAD STREET



DUNN GREEN LEATHER TANNERY AND FULLER, CHANDLER & PATTEN FACTORY. FROM MOUNT BELLEVUE



C. M. BRETT CO. SHOE FACTORY



A PROSPEROUS MACHINERY AND TOOL INDUSTRY



I. FOULDS & SON TEXTILE LEATHER FACTORY. CHERRY STREET





SECOND BRIDGE ON THE ASSABET



DANFORTH'S FALLS



HUDSON PRINTING COMPANY, WASHINGTON AND SOUTH STREETS

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UNIVERSITY PRODUCTS, INC. #859-5503

BOSTON COLLEGE



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